

1958

Museum Radio Program
Mrs Charles Richardson, Mrs George Ford

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E You know Cleveland's art museum is not just the home of many fine collections of art and special touring exhibits. It also has an extensive program of first-rate classes and lectures devoted to helping us understand and appreciate art. This program includes all ages, beginning with young children.

B And there are many children's classes, which help them to feel at home in the museum, to achieve a lasting interest in art, and to develop their own individual artistic talent. Every Saturday morning, from 9:30 to 12, the very popular Gallery Classes meet. These are free, and open to all children above six years old. On some Saturdays, more than 500 children come to study in small groups in the galleries, and draw in crayon or pencil, directed by a member of the museum staff. They learn to develop their own talents, not by copying, but by examining styles and techniques in the pictures they see in the museum.

E Also on Saturday mornings, from 9:30 to 12, the museum offers members' classes, open to all children of museum members, for a small fee of \$2 a semester. The concern of these classes, like that of the gallery classes, is the child's cultural development and enjoyment, and inspiration for creative work. In the museum classrooms the children work with a great variety of materials, draw, model, and paint, as well as study art appreciation.

B But the museum doesn't stop there! The most talented children in the Gallery and Members Classes are given the opportunity of joining a Special Class, in which they may enroll, free of charge, when they are 13, and they can continue throughout their high school years. The Special Classes, divided into a beginners' section, taught by Mr. Fred Vollman, and an advanced section, taught by Mr. Ronald Day, work on both individual and class projects in many media. They concentrate on subjects familiar to the students and make extensive use of museum collections for study

and inspiration. Many of these special-class students receive scholarships and go on to graduate school in art.

E And they deserve all the credit they get! Selections from the past year's work of these beginning and advanced special classes are now hung at the museum in one of the most exciting and stimulating exhibits I have ever seen, one which should appeal to everyone, to the amateur and the professional artist, to the casual and the informed observer.

B Don't you think this wide appeal is partially in the exhibit's showing all the work which goes into a finished picture; the extensive study of the students, and the painstaking guidance and help of their teachers?

E I certainly do. And this is such a striking and colorful exhibit! Much of the brilliance and color is due to the fact that water colors are used to such a great extent and in such a variety of ways. Both Mr. Day and Mr. Vollman realize that the medium of watercolor is a particularly difficult one, and I think that they have done an excellent job in helping their students to feel the need for great control and to grasp the important values emphasized in each lesson. In the ~~beginning class~~ beginning class, the younger students had two exercises in using the technique of watercolor. In one, the students themselves took turns posing in a variety of positions while the rest of the class made quick brush sketches of them.

B You can certainly see that by using a brush with one or two watercolors, the students were able to concentrate on the general movement of the figure, and to eliminate the excessive detail so often seen in figure drawings. In another lesson, the emphasis was on breaking away from realism, (the students' favorite form of expression), and on developing a sense of design. The younger group was instructed to divide the space on their paper into flat color areas, which formed strikingly colorful patterns, while the older group experimented with

arranging color areas to indicate shapes and depths in space.

E To me, one of the highlights of the exhibit is the very colorful and instructive display of insect paintings done by the advanced special class.

B That's my favorite, for not only do the students show their finished vibrant watercolors, but they indicate the progressive steps in reaching their goal, which was to express a feeling or emotion about some characteristic aspect of the insect.

E In this project, the students worked on a subject which was meaningful to them and drew on material available in the Museum. First of all, the students examined actual insects, such as grasshoppers and bees. They then studied the engravings of Rogalski, the exhibits of Pozatti and the drawings of Durer and made careful research drawings from these two sources. In order to experiment with their own individual composition and expression, the students made brush drawings in black and white watercolor, and then added small color spots. The final composition and full coloring of the insect is not meant to be an accurate detailed description but rather an expression of the students' own emotional reaction to the insect.

B For instance, in one painting of a bee, the lines and colors are clear and vibrant suggesting energy and power; in another, the bright colors are accented by white to indicate motion; and in still a third, oranges and yellows are washed together to suggest the very warm environment of the insect. Thus, you can see that this lesson was not one of merely copying, but of making the student think and create independently, and of sharpening his senses of seeing, hearing and feeling.

E There is a second project showing the teacher's methods of develop-

ing the students' watercolor techniques. In this series of progressive steps, there was particular stress on the organization, selection, and emphasis of material. The first stage was a still life drawing emphasizing three dimensional shapes. This was followed by a drawing rearranging and organizing these selected forms. To emphasize distinct areas in the composition, making it very precise, the students next painted their still lifes in white, light gray, dark gray, and black. In the fourth stage, they washed these four color areas together, and finally they began to use a mixture of cool and warm colors to develop a sensitivity to the temperature of color.

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B The students' ability to learn new techniques enables them to rise to the challenge of unusual outside assignments. Once a year, the Art Museum cooperates with the Cleveland Public Library on one of the Library's special programs, which this year included an exhibit on France. Members of the advanced special class painted for this exhibit posters in watercolors, black ink, and touches of thick poster paint. These posters evolved from the students' individual impressions of a particular artist whom they carefully studied.

E Perhaps the poster which best succeeds in capturing the style and feeling of the French impressionist painters is a painting, which gives one the feeling of the artist Braque without actually being a Braque.

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B Have you ever tried to complete a picture in one continuous line without lifting your pen from the paper? It's quite a trick.... but that's exactly what some of the beginning special students have done, moreover - with great erudition, humor, and dramatic flair. They studied Greek vases and myths, and Picasso's Greek drawings, and provided with this background in style and subject matter, went to work to produce balanced drawings divided into planned areas. The finished drawings have the humor of expression and of grotesque shapes, the dramatic force of

immediacy, of arrested action and large gestures. They have the suggestiveness of simplicity, where even the flow of the figures' robes adds dramatic touches, and pattern is given in a few tiny details. All this without once lifting their pens! A tour de force, and yet a fine accomplishment!

E What fun both classes had, too, experimenting with 'shapes in space'. Inspired by Tony Hughes' book of the same name, the beginners special group, using the medium of paper sculpture, created some delightful heads and animals. To me, one of the cleverest is a three dimensional pink pig with long pointed ears!

B There's no end to the variety of media! The advanced group, influenced by Jacques Lipchitz' early endeavors, and using the medium of wooden sculpture, worked with shapes within shapes to form a rhythmical movement within and around the design. And there are mobiles too, ever fascinating examples of shapes moving in space, excellent studies of design, balance, and movement. Whether they be simple shapes cut out of cardboard and painted, or more complicated shapes made of wood and plastic, they must be arranged to make shifting, well balanced areas of color and shape.

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E In the display case, you will find some unique sculpture. These animals, and figure-heads were made out of raw red sculpture clay which was mixed with grog (a baked clay, to give it a stronger textural quality). The furriness of the bear, for instance, was brought out through modeling and through the addition of Engob, a dark clay which was used instead of glaze to give colored highlights and which could be easily painted on the object. The students learned to retain the quality of the material they were working with, and to incorporate it in their design. They gave their figures a solid, lasting base and emphasized a particularly characteristic aspect of the figure, such as the smooth skin of the horse, or the furriness of the bear.

B And don't miss the woodcuts! You'll be amazed at how many blocks it takes to produce a finished woodcut, and how many variations on the original design can be achieved by changing color combinations!

E By now we hope you are convinced that everyone will be interested in this exhibit. Here is color, gaiety, humor, and variety. Here is much to admire and much to learn.

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B This special classes exhibit certainly shows the high calibre of the museum's children's classes. And other parts of the museum's educational program are equally outstanding. They offer free guided tours to any group, club, or convention, and talks on any desired subject where material is available. They have regular Friday and Sunday lectures, movies, and programs on many subjects, free and open to the public. You can read about these in the newspaper, or in the museum bulletin. There are Sunday afternoon Gallery talks, open to everyone, and many art courses for members. In addition to all this, the museum has a fine library for reference and study!

E We are certainly lucky to have a museum which offers so many different opportunities to learn, and we hope you will be able to enjoy many of them.